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INDUSTRY MAKES THE DESERT BLOOM, WHILE IDLENESS LEADS TO RUIN.

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THE RED BREAST OF THE ROBIN.*

AN IRISH LEGEND.

Of all the merry little birds that live up in the tree,
And carol from the sycamore and chestnut,
The prettiest little gentleman that dearest is to me,
Is the one in coat of brown and scarlet waistcoat.
It's cockit little Robin?
And his head he keeps a-bobbin',
Of all the other pretty fowls I'd choose him;
For he sings so sweetly still,
Through his tiny slender bill,
With a little patch of red upon his bosom.

When the frost is in the air, and the snow upon the ground,
To other little birdies so bewiderin',
Picking up the crumbs near the window he is found,
Singing Christmas stories to the children,
Of how two tender babes
Were left in woodland glades,
By a cruel man who took 'em there to lose 'em;
But Bobby saw the crime;
(He was watching all the time!)
And he blushed a perfect crimson on his bosom.

When the charming leaves of autumn around us thickly fall,
And everything seems sorrowful and saddening,
Robin may be heard on the corner of a wall
Singing what is solacing and gladdening.
And sure, from what I've heard,
He's God's own little bird,
And sings to those in grief just to amuse 'em;
But once he sat forlorn
On a cruel Crown of Thorn,
And the blood it stained his pretty little bosom.

Selected.

* Our cut represents an English Robin.

[From the American Garden.]

Pruning Grape Vines.

THE KNIFFIN SYSTEM.

Probably there is no one thing in connection with growing Grapes that is so little understood, or on which there is a wider diversity of opinions and practice, than in pruning the vines.

These various systems and methods, and the often ambiguous language employed in describing them, even with illustrations, are apt to confuse the ordinary mind so that, after perusal, the reader has no definite or intelligent idea of how to proceed to bring about a desired result.

* * * *

As a rule, I think the great majority who trim Grape vines leave too much wood. I have come to this conclusion from seeing a good deal of work done by professional (!) gardeners. The vines are overtaxed in bearing, or attempting more than they can accomplish. The clusters become smaller, the fruit rots, the vine is enfeebled and exhausted, and "Grapes do not amount to much." Of course, where shade is the permanent object, the trimming will not need to be so close as where fine fruit is most desirable, and for the former purpose such strong-growing varieties as Clinton, Concord, Elvira, etc.. should be employed. Hence the difficulty of laying down any fixed rules to suit all cases.

If Mr. Brown needs a large crop of fruit for his own consumption, it is not a matter of much importance to him whether the clusters are large and handsome or not, if there is only an abundance of them; while to Mr. Jones, wanting his crop for sale, large, perfect clusters are of the utmost importance, and 200 pounds of such fruit would be worth more to him than 300 pounds of Mr. Brown's would, and the method of pruning may be the sole cause of the difference. Fall pruning is often recommended by writers on the subject, and is one of those operations in the garden that can be done to forward spring work, as there is generally plenty of time that can be spared for this purpose during favorable fall weather, while, if deferred till February, the usual time, cold, stormy weather, or other contingencies, may arise to make the work tedious and disagreeable, if not prevent it altogether till late in spring, when other work is pressing.

I once knew a city gentleman who always made it a practice to trim his vines on Thanksgiving day, unless stormy weather prevented.

By this time the wood is ripened, and the foliage has accomplished its mission. The advocates of fall pruning I believe almost invariably recommend to leave more buds than in winter pruning, especially if the vines are to be removed from the trellis and laid down, for the purpose of guarding against the loss of any buds that might occur in handling. In such cases, another pruning or rubbing off of surplus buds, in spring, will be necessary.

In large vineyards, winter pruning is preferred, as it can be done at a season of comparative leisure. The time required to do it in the fall would materially interfere with other work; but if the wood is to be used for propagation, fall pruning is best.

The "Kniffin" system, now so generally practiced in the Hudson River Grape region, is the easiest, simplest, and cheapest of any I have yet seen, and has become so popular there that hundreds and thousands of acres have been changed from the "Fuller" and other methods to this.

Two wires only are used, three and a half and six feet from the ground respectively. Each vine has four arms, eighteen to twenty inches loug, or about five buds on each, two arms on each wire, which are renewed each year by removing each arm up to the shoot nearest the trunk of the vine cutting those off to five buds, and tying them down in place of the arms removed.

A vine thus pruned resembles somewhat two T's, one above the other. The buds from these arms are allowed to grow and care for themselves generally, and, with a little labor and attention,—by stopping the laterals at one leaf and removing the fruit from the bud intended for next year's arm, if it should prove too weak to carry it and make sufficient growth at the same time,—they can almost invariably be depended on. Aside from the simplicity, saving of labor, and economy of wire in the trellis, it has the advantage that the lowest fruit is far enough from the ground to keep it clean, and with moderate stooping one can pass from one trellis to another without being compelled to go to the end of one, as is the case when four or more wires are used. The summer pruning consists in nothing more than clipping off the ends of some shoots that may chance to grow too rampant.

This, like any other system, is subject to modifications, one of which is to have but two arms to the vine, each tree feet long, and have each alternate vine take the upper wire, the others the lower one.

It is frequently recommended, and sometimes practiced by those who know no better, to cut away the vines or remove the leaves to let in the sunshine to ripen the fruit. I hope no reader of THE AMERICAN GARDEN will listen to or practice any such nonsense as that.

The affect of the sunshine on the fruit is through the leaves and roots, by warming the ground. The fruit could better dispense with the sunshine than with the leaves, as they bear the same relation to the fruit that our lungs do to our body.

Reader, plant a few more vines!

From the Chicago Specimen.

A Model Recommendation.

Recently a seeker after happiness in the line of printing material, to be cast on the "American System of Interchangeable Type Bodies," referred us to a prominent man in his neighborhood as to his standing. On writing to the gentleman we received the following reply, which is directly to the point:

GENTLEMEN:—Yours of 6th, at hand, and in reply would say that I know Mr. John Simmons. His wife owns some real estate in this place. He has not been a resident of our village for three or four years. I know nothing against his character nor financial responsibility;—nor can I say what success he might have in publishing a newspaper. He can do one thing that I would like to know how to do myself, *i. e.*—live without working.

Yours, etc.
PETER HAMMOND.

WHAT IS FARMING?

It is something more than staying on a farm. It is something more than skinning the soil. It is more than selling hay or potatoes, and bulky crops unanimalized. Farming is a business, a profession, a practical and scientific operation whereby the soil is used for profit, and improved under the operation. The processes of nature must be understood and worked in harmony with the chemistry of the earth and air. The processes of the elements must be understood, if not in their technical terms and language, in that sensible understanding, that common-sense way, that their own advantage and capabilities may be turned to best accounts. The lawyer works by law and precedent, the phyiscian works by symptoms and indications, the merchant by rules and observations, the mechanic by measures and capacities. The farmer must work by all—by rules, laws, observation and experiment. He must be a practical lawyer, doctor, merchant and mechanic of the vegetable, the animal and trade-world about him. He must be a skilled workman in the productive, operative and commercial circles in which his business lies and his sphere of speculation extends.

Let every man strive to add a good name and an honorable character to his other capital.